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## RAILWAY STATIONS.

THE general improvement in Railway Stations has hardly kept pace with the speed and safety of the trains, or with the enhanced comfort of railway carriages. In many instances the stations have been vastly improved, and can take rank as architectural adornments of a town; but many of them still show the same primitive nakedness as they did on the day when they first saw the light, thirty or forty years ago. Birmingham, York, and Preston may well be proud of their stations, for they are the finest structures of the kind in the world, and are hardly likely to be surpassed. York Station has been called 'The North-Eastern Folly;' and if spending more money by thousands over a building than is actually required, and simply for show, can be called folly, the new name is not misapplied. The chief considerations in building a railway station are that it shall afford every convenience to the travelling public; that the offices shall be where they are mostly required; that the different platforms shall be easy to get at; and that the passengers can get from one place to another with ordinary intelligence.

Although the South London lines cannot boast such fine buildings as those that run to the north, their average degree of respectability will be equal, if not greater. No railway in the south having the same traffic can show such a miserable apology for a station as there is at St Dunstan's Junction, in Yorkshire, on the Great Northern Railway; nor can any town in the south having a population of ten thousand feel that it is worse off than Bingley, on the Midland main line, near Bradford.

With the vast populations that there are in Lancashire and Yorkshire, the accommodation in these districts can only be called wretched—that is, when the large towns are excepted. The Midland Company have begun to improve their smaller stations in the West Riding, and Keighley and Shipley are model stations in their way. The former is one of the best arranged in the country,

and should serve as a model for many more. St Pancras is too large, and at times appears a wilderness. Paddington and King's Cross always seem busy, though they lack the grandeur of the former. The Exchange Station, Manchester, is another of those stations that seem to have been built for show. It may do very well for local traffic from Manchester, but what about passengers arriving at Victoria and wanting to catch a train from the Exchange? The walk from one to the other under cover certainly is one of those arrangements not conducive to the good temper or comfort of the public, nor one to make them think highly of the wisdom of railway directors. It is a curiosity; and it is to be hoped that it will remain unique. If Mr Ruskin should ever go that way, the public will doubtless be treated to such a description of it as he only can give, for it beggars the pen of an ordinary mortal.

Junction stations have certainly improved within the last ten years, and well they might, for some of them have been a maze to folks not used to travelling; and to this day, and probably to the end of time, junctions will be counted amongst the nuisances of railway travelling. Clapham Junction is the busiest junction in the world, as far as number of trains passing through it is concerned; but it is not so interesting to the casual observer as Rugby, Crewe, Derby, York, and Carlisle. These may be called long-distance junctions; and when important trains arrive, the life and bustle are most interesting to watch. Passengers' luggage plays a very important part in the every-day work at these stations; and the labels will often show that the owners have gone pretty nearly round the world. Genuine travellers these; but they are seldom seen at Clapham Junction, as this station is almost entirely a local one, and the passengers alighting at it are largely made up of business people going backwards and forwards between their residences and places of business. The same may be said of Finsbury Park and Willesden Junction.

Railway stations have their ups and downs as well as ordinary mortals. To-day a certain

station may be proud of its position as a terminus; to-morrow it is decided to extend the line, and in a short time it will dwindle to a roadside station; or it may be decided that it shall be a junction, when its importance will be greatly increased. Knottingley, between Doncaster and Wakefield, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, was once a very important junction, and all the Great Northern trains for the north used to pass through it; but the West Riding line took away one-half of this traffic, and the line to Selby the other half, and the Great Northern is now represented there by two or three trains a day. Building and rebuilding stations is a very heavy item of expenditure, and one not to be indulged in lightly; but there is a case on record where a runaway train knocked down a station that was in sad need of being rebuilt, much to the joy of the inhabitants of the town, who had come to the conclusion that only such a catastrophe could bring about the desired end; and it did.

But with all their faults, the railways of this country are immeasurably ahead of those on the Continent, and save on a few points, are to be preferred to the colossal concerns on the American continent. The system of railway travelling in America may suit the Americans, but it is hardly likely ever to be copied throughout in this country.

Railway stations are used now by the public for other purposes than travelling. The Book-stall is an attraction to many people; and the Refreshment Room is well patronised by young men whose thoughts are not on travelling bent. The fire in the General Waiting Room often gives warmth to those who have not the means to provide even a few coals for their own desolate hearth.

But the most important use of a station, after travelling purposes are concerned, is that of a meeting-place. Every class of people make appointments at railway stations, and there conduct their business 'on the cheap;' and not business only, for more than one of our London termini might well be called 'The Lovers' Trysting Place.' Any observer can see this at both Charing Cross and Victoria Stations. Some of these people may be going by train; but there is no doubt that a vast number of people use the comfort of a railway station without helping in any way towards the expenses incurred by the companies in providing this accommodation. These are some of the public privileges of our British railways denied on foreign lines, and so long as they are not abused, they are not likely to be withdrawn.

Fifty years ago refreshment rooms were the only sign of trade being carried on at a railway station; but food for the body was soon found to be insufficient, and Messrs W. H. Smith & Sons and others catered for the mind. Now there is a tendency to extend the shopkeeping business at our large stations; and if it should ever be necessary for railway companies to look about for means of raising a dividend, the rent-roll from shops on station platforms would be an acceptable departure from their orthodox business of general carriers.

There are some stations which have an importance attached to them far beyond their traffic-

earning capacity. Windsor, Wolferton, Esher, and Chislehurst are some of these. No station in the world has been visited by so many celebrities during the last fifty years as Windsor, on the Great Western Railway. Sovereigns from every quarter of the globe, distinguished statesmen, officers, savants, poets, and travellers of all nationalities, have arrived at this station to visit England's Queen; and if a record had been kept, the list would for many reasons be an interesting one.

Wolfferton, on the Great Eastern Railway, is the station used by the Prince of Wales, and its importance and most of its revenue is owing to this fact. Esher and Chislehurst are interesting stations in so far that they were once used by two exiled French monarchs, Louis-Philippe, who resided at Claremont House, and Napoleon III., who resided and died at Chislehurst.

In years to come, railway stations may play a part in the history of our country; but whether they do or not, one thing is certain, and that is, that such places are mixed up in the daily life of most of us, and are the stages whereon many a drama of human life is played in reality. Joy and sorrow, love-scenes and tragedies, have been witnessed on that public stage the Station platform.

## MY SHIPMATE LOUISE.

THE ROMANCE OF A WRECK.

### CHAPTER XX.—I SEARCH THE WRECK.

THERE could be very little doubt that the drift of a light empty shell of a wreck with a yard and mast and shrouds forward for the wind to catch hold of would be considerable in such weather as this. Helped by the blows of the seas, she might easily blow dead to leeward, in the trough as she was, at the rate of some three to four miles in the hour, so that daybreak would find her forty or fifty miles distant from the spot where we had boarded her. However, I comforted myself with the reflection that the commanders of the two ships would have a clear perception of such a drift as I calculated, and allow for it in the search they would surely make for the hull. I had but one fear: that the cutter had been seen leaving the wreck, for there was an interval at least of a minute or two between her dropping astern and manœuvring with her three oars and her envelopment by the fog. If, then, she had been sighted, the inference would inevitably be that Miss Temple, Colledge, and myself were in her; and so the hunt would be for the cutter, without reference to the hull, with every prospect of the search carrying the ships miles below the verge of our horizon.

Meanwhile, as I stood in that doorway looking into the blackness over the sides, I bent my ear anxiously forward; but though there were constant shocks of the sea smiting the bow, I never caught the noise of water falling in weight enough upon the deck to alarm me. The leap of the surge seemed to be always forward of the fore-shrouds, and the ducking and tossing of the fabric was so nimble, and the pouring of the

blast so steadfast, that nearly all the water that sprang to the blow of the bow was carried overboard by the wind. This was about as comforting an assurance as could come to me; for I tell you it was enough to turn one's heart into lead to look into that starless wall of blackness close against the ship, to see nothing but the pallid glimmer of froth, to hearken to the noises in the air, to feel the sickening and dizzy heavings of the sea, and then realise that this hull had been struck by lightning, that the fore-part of her was burnt into a thin case of charred timbers, and that all three hatches in her, together with the skylight, lay open and yawning like the mouths of wells to the first rush of sea that should tumble over the side.

I will not feign to remember how that night passed. The tall wax candle burnt bravely and lasted long; but the guttering of it to the circlings of the air in the extremity of the cabin, obliged me to light another before the night was spent. It a little encouraged Miss Temple to be able to see. Once the candle was blown out; and when I had succeeded in lighting it afresh, after a few minutes of groping and hunting and manœuvring with my tinder-box, I looked at the girl, and knew by the horror that shone in her eyes, and the marble hardness in the aspect of her parted lips, as though her mouth were some carved expression of fear, how heart-subduing had that short spell of blackness proved. From time to time she would ask for a little wine, which she sipped as though thirsty, but she swallowed a few drops only, as if she feared that the wine, by heating her, would increase her thirst; yet when I spoke of going below to seek for some fresh water, she begged me not to leave her.

'It is the memory of the body that sat at this table which makes loneliness insupportable to me, Mr Dugdale,' she exclaimed. 'I seemed to see the dreadful object when the candle went out. I thought I had more spirit. I am but a very weak woman, after all.'

'I do not think so,' said I; 'you are bearing this frightful trial very nobly. How would it be with some girls I know? They would be swooning away; they would be exhausting themselves in cries; they would be tearing themselves to pieces in hysterics. And how is it with me? Sometimes I am frightened to death, but not with fears of darkness or of the dead. I am certain we shall be rescued; this hull is making excellent weather of it; there is food and drink below, yet I am filled with consternation and grief. Why should it be otherwise? We are creatures of nerves, and this is an experience to test the courage of a saint.'

Well, we would exchange a few sentences after this pattern, and then fall silent for a whole hour at a time. She never closed her eyes throughout the night. Whenever I glanced at her, I met her gaze brilliant with emotion. The change was so sudden that I found it impossible to fully realise it. When I thought of Miss Temple aboard the *Countess Ida*, her haughtiness, her character of almost insolent reserve, how she had hardly found it in her to address me with an accent of courtesy, her ungracious treatment of me after the service I had done her in rescuing her from a perilous situation: I say

when I recalled all this and a deal more, and then viewed her as she sat opposite, crouching in a corner, supporting herself by grasping the table with her heavily-ringed fingers, the high-born delicate beauty of her lineaments showing like some cameo in ivory, and reflected that she and I were absolutely alone, that it might come to her owing her life to me, or that we might be doomed to miserably perish together—this girl, this unapproachable young lady, at whom I had been wont to stare furtively with fascinated eyes on board the *Indianian* for long spells at a stretch—I could not bring my mind to credit the reality of our situation.

Occasionally I would edge to the door and look out, but there was never anything to see.

All night long it blew a strong wind; but shortly before daybreak it fined down on a sudden into a light air out of the south-west, leaving a troubled rolling sea behind it. It was still very thick all round the horizon, so that from the door of the deck-house my gaze scarcely penetrated a distance of two miles. It was no longer fog, however, but cloud, sullen, low-lying, here and there shaping out; a familiar tropical dawn in these parallels, though it made one think too of the smothers you fall in with on the edge of the Gulf Stream.

I stepped on deck to wait for the light to break, and Miss Temple came to the door to look also. The hull still rolled violently, but without the dangerous friskiness of the jumps, recoils, and staggering recoveries of the night, when there was a sharp sea running as well as a long heaving swell. My heart was in my gaze as the dim faintness came sifting into the darkness of the east. In a few minutes it was a gray morn, the sea an ugly lead, and the horizon all round of the aspect of a drizzling November day in the English Channel. We both swept the water with our eyes, again and again looking, straining our vision against the dim distance; but to no purpose.

'Do you see anything?' exclaimed Miss Temple.

'No,' I answered; 'there is nothing in sight.'

'Oh, my heart will break!' she cried.

'We must wait a while,' said I: 'this sort of weather has a trick of clearing rapidly, and it may be all bright sky and wide shining surface of ocean long before noon: then we shall see the ships, and they will see us. But this is a low level. Something may heave into view from the height of that mast. I shall not be long gone. Be careful to hold on firmly, Miss Temple; nay, oblige me by sitting in the deck-house. Should you relax your grasp, a sudden roll may carry you overboard.'

In silence and with a face of despair, she took her seat on a locker, and very warily I made my way forwards. We had taken but a brief view of the hull when we boarded her, and the appearance of her towards the bows was new to me. There were twenty signs of her having been swept again and again by the seas. No doubt, her hatches had been uncovered, that her people might rummage her before going away in her boats; and the covers, for all I could tell, might have been rolled overboard by some of her violent workings. Yet it was certain that she must have been swept when her hatches

were covered, or the lieutenant would not have found her with a dry hold. But I had been long enough at sea to know that it is the improbable conjecture that oftenest fits the fact of a marine disaster.

I took a view of the foremast, to make sure that all was sound with it, and then sprang into the shrouds and gained the top. Some few feet of the splintered topmast still stood, and under the platform at which I had arrived the foreyard swang drearily to its overhauled braces hanging in bights. There was no more to see here than from the deck. The thick atmosphere receded nothing, and would have been as impenetrable had I climbed a thousand feet. It was like being in the heart of an amphitheatre of sulky shadows. The water rolled foamless, and there was little more air to be felt than was made by the sickeningly monotonous swing of the solitary spar from whose summit I explored the near ocean limits in all directions, frowning to the heart-breaking intensity of my stare. Then, thought I, we are alone! and if we are to be picked up by either of the ships, it will not be to-day, nor maybe to-morrow!

I glanced down at the deck of the hull, and observed that the sides of the fore-hatch were black with extinguished fire. The head-rail was gone, and from the eyes of her to the deck-house aft the fabric had a fearfully wrecked look, with its mutilated bulwark stanchions, its yawning hatchways, its dislocated capstan, and other details of a like kind, all helping to a fearful wildness of appearance to one who viewed, as I did from an eminence, the crazy, fire-blackened, dismantled old basket, that wallowed as though every head of swell which rolled at her must overwhelm and drown her hollow interior.

I again sent my eyes in another passionate search, then descended. As I sprang from the shrouds on to the deck, my eye was taken by the brig's bell, that dangled from a frame close against the foremast. Dreading lest an increase in the swell should start it off into ringing in some dismal hour of gloom and heighten Miss Temple's misery and terrors, I unhooked the tongue of it and threw it down, and rejoined my companion, whose white face put the piteous question of her heart to me in silence.

'No,' said I, swaying in front of her as I held on to the door; 'there is nothing to be seen.'

'Oh, it is hard! it is hard!' she cried. 'If one could only recall a few hours—be able to go back to yesterday! I do not fear death: but to die thus—to drown in that dreadful sea—no one to be able to tell how I perished.' She sobbed, but with dry eyes.

There was no reasoning with such a fit of despair as this, nor was it possible for me to say anything out of which she might extract a grain of comfort, seeing that I could but speak conjecturally, and with no other perception than was to be shaped by the faint light of my own hopes. My heart was deeply moved by her misery. Her beauty showed wan, and was inexpressibly appealing with its air of misery. The effects of the long and fearful vigils of the night that was gone were cruelly visible in her. There

was a violet shadow under her eyes, her lips were pale, her lids drooped, her hair hung in some little disorder about her brow and ears; her very dress seemed significant of shipwreck, mocking the eye with what the grim usage of the sea had already transformed into mere ironical finery. Yet there was too much of the nature she had familiarised me to on board the Indianman still expressed in the natural haughty set of her lips, charged as they were with the anguish that worked in her, to win me to any attempt of tender reassurance. I watched her dumbly, though my soul was melted into pity. Presently she looked at me.

'I suppose there is nothing to be done, Mr Dugdale?'

'Indeed, then,' said I, 'there is a deal to be done. First of all, you must cheer up your heart, which you will find easy if you can credit me when I tell you that this hull is perfectly buoyant; that though the weather is thick and gloomy, the sun as he gains power is certain to open out the ocean to us; that there are two ships close at hand searching for us; that there are provisions enough below to enable us to support life for days, and perhaps weeks; and that, even if the Indianman or the corvette fail to fall in with us, we are sure to be sighted by one of the numerous vessels which are daily traversing this great ocean highway. What, then, are we to do but compose our minds, exert our patience, keep a bright lookout, be provided with means for signalling our distress, and meanwhile not to suffer our unfortunate condition to starve us?—And that reminds me to overhaul the pantry for something better than biscuit to break our fast with.'

A softness I should have thought impossible to the spirited fires of her eyes when all was well with her entered her gaze for a moment as it rested upon me, and a faint smile flickered upon and vanished off her lips; but she did not speak, and I dropped through the hatch to ascertain if the pantry could yield us something more nourishing than ship's bread.

The sullenness of the day without lay in gloom below. I was forced to return for a candle, with which I entered the little cabin that I had visited on the previous day; but when I came to make a search, I could find nothing more to eat than cheese, biscuit, and marmalade. There was a number of raw hams, but the galley was gone, and there was no means to cook them. There were two casks of flour, a sack of some kind of dried beans, and a small barrel of moist sugar. These matters had probably been overlooked when the crew hurriedly removed themselves from the brig. No doubt, at the time of jettisoning such commodities as the hold might have stored they had broken out as much food and water as they could take with them. There was more than a bottle of wine in the deck-house; down here, stowed away in straw and secured by a batten, were some three or four more of full bottles, all, I supposed, containing the same generous liquor contained in the first of them we had tasted. But there was no fresh water. I sought with diligence, but to no purpose. Possibly the people might have left some casks of it in the hold; but that was a search I would not at present undertake.



I took some cheese and marmalade and another handful of biscuits, along with a knife and a couple of tin dishes. As I passed through the cabin, the light of the candle I held glanced upon a stand of small-arms fixed just abaft the short flight of the hatch ladder. There were some thirty to forty muskets of an old-fashioned make, even for those days; and on either hand of them, swinging in tiers or rows from nails or hooks in the bulkhead, were a quantity of cutlasses, half-pikes, tomahawks, and other items of the grim machinery of murder. I placed the food upon the deck-house table.

'A shabby repast, Miss Temple,' said I; 'but we may easily support life on such fare until we are rescued.'

She ate some biscuit and marmalade and drank a little wine; but she incessantly sent her gaze through the windows or the open door, and sighed frequently in tremulous respirations; and sometimes there would enter a singular look of bewilderment into the expression of her eyes, as though her mind at such moments failed her, and did but imperfectly understand our situation. I would then fear that the horror which possessed her might end in breaking down her spirits, and even dement her, indeed. Already her eyes were languid with grief and want of rest, and such strength and life as they still possessed seemed weakened yet by the shadowing of the long fringes. I endeavoured to win her away from her thoughts by talking to her.

I possessed a pocket-book, which supplied me with pencil and paper, and I drew a diagram of the two ships' and the wreck's position, as I was best able to conceive it, and made arrows to figure the direction of the wind, and marked distances in figures, and enlarged freely and heartily upon our prospects, pointing with my pencil to the paper whilst I talked. This interested her. She came round to the locker on which I sat, and placed herself beside me, and leaned her face near to mine, supporting her head by her elbow whilst she gazed with eyes riveted to the paper, listening thirstily. I had never had her so close to me before, saving that day when we swung together on to the hencoop; but then it was a constrained situation, and she had let me know that it was very distasteful to her. It was far otherwise now. She was near me of her own will; I felt her warm breath on my cheek; the subtle fragrance of her presence was in the air I respired. I talked eagerly to conceal the emotions she excited, and I felt the blood hot in my face when I had made an end with my diagram, and drew a little away to restore the book to my pocket.

She now seemed able and willing to converse, but she did not offer to leave my side.

'Suppose the ships are unable to find us, Mr Dugdale?'

'Some other vessel is certain to fall in with us.'

'But she may be bound to a part of the world very remote from India or England?'

'True,' said I; 'but as she jogs along, she may encounter a vessel proceeding to England, into which we shall be easily able to tranship ourselves.'

'How tedious! We may have to wander for months about the ocean!'

'It is always step by step, Miss Temple, in this life. Let us begin at the beginning, and quit this wreck at any rate.'

'All my luggage is in the Indianan. How I am to manage I cannot conceive,' said she, running her eyes over her dress and lifting her hand to her hat.

'Pray, let no such consideration as dress trouble you. The experience will gain in romance from our necessities, and you will be able to read *Robinson Crusoe* with new enjoyment.'

She faintly smiled, with just a hint of peevishness in the curl of her lip.

'If this be romance, Mr Dugdale, may my days henceforth, if God be merciful enough to preserve us, be steeped in the dullest prose.'

'I wonder where Collodge and the cutter's crew are?' said I.

'I do not think,' she exclaimed, 'if Mr Collodge were in your place he would show your spirit.'

'He was a great favourite of yours, Miss Temple.'

'Not great. I rather liked him. I knew some of his connections. He was an amiable person. I did not know that he was engaged to be married.'

I was astonished that she should have said this; but I was eager to encourage her to talk, and in our state of misery it could signify but little what topic we lighted upon.

'Did he inform you he was engaged?' said I.

'No. I perceived it in his looks, when his cousin asked him the question.—Did he ever tell you who the young lady was?' she added listlessly, and though she spoke of the thing, it was easy to see that she was without interest in it.

I could not tell a lie, and silence would have been injurious to my wishes for her. Besides, she had guessed the truth by no help from me, and then, again, our situation rendered the subject exquisitely trifling and insignificant.

'Yes,' I replied; 'we were cabin fellows, and intimate. He showed me the girl's portrait—a plump, pretty little woman. Her name is Fanny Crawley, daughter of one of the numberless Sir Johns or Sir Thomases of this age.'

She was looking through the cabin door at the sea, and scarcely seemed to hear or to heed me. Am I strictly honourable in this? thought I. Pshaw! it was no moment to consider the rights and wrongs of such a thing. Her discovery had freed me from all obligation of secrecy, and what I had supplied she would have easily been able to ascertain for herself on her return home, if, indeed, home was ever to be viewed again by either of us.

'What horrible weather,' she exclaimed, bringing her eyes to my face; 'there is no wind, and the sea rolls like liquid lead. When you were at sea, were you ever in a situation of danger such as this?'

'This is an uneasy time,' said I; 'but do not call it a situation of danger yet. I am going shortly to overhaul the wreck. I must keep her afloat until we are taken off her.'

'How long were you at sea, Mr Dugdale?'

'Two years.'

'Is your father a sailor?'

'No; my father is dead. He was captain

in the 38th Regiment of Foot, and was killed in Burma.'

There was a kind of dawning of interest in her eyes, an expression I had not noticed when she talked of Colledge and his engagement.

'My father was in the army too,' said she; 'but he saw very little service. Is your mother living?'

'She is.'

She sighed bitterly, and hid her face whilst she exclaimed: 'Oh, my poor mother! my poor mother! How little she knows! And she was so reluctant to let me leave her.' She sighed again deeply, and let her hands fall, and then sank into silence.

### AN AUSTRALIAN WOOLSHED.

By 'AN OLD CHUM.'

EVERY day Australia becomes better known. The completion of telegraphic communication, and the magnificent steamers of the P. and O., Orient, and other lines have largely conduced to that result; visits, too, from Australian cricketers, footballers, and rowing men have all tended to awaken and keep alive our interest in this far southern land. A voyage to Australia is a very simple affair in these days, and it has been 'done' by prince and politician, by historian and divine, by lecturer and actor; while no professed 'globe-trotter' thinks his tour complete unless the antipodes are included in his programme. Many books have been written, too, about the 'sunny south'; but it is a hard matter for a visitor to form correct impressions of so vast a country, where his stay is mostly for a few short months, sometimes, indeed, for only weeks, and the greater part of that time spent in the towns. Under such circumstances, then, it is not surprising that the colonist on visiting the 'old country' should often be amused, and sometimes just a little bit indignant, at the ignorance displayed by the 'home people' in matters more particularly appertaining to up-country life in Australia.

Let me try to familiarise some of these scenes to the readers of *Chambers's*—for many a well-thumbed copy of the *Journal* finds its way into the back-blocks, and is passed from hand to hand, cheering and enlivening the lonely hours of the solitary boundary rider, or tired-out Jackaroo (the young man getting experience is so called).

The time for gathering in the great wool harvest of Australasia varies in the different districts, according to climatic conditions, and there is hardly any time of the year during which shearing is not going on somewhere. Queensland and the far north of South Australia begin in January, February, and March; New South Wales takes up the tale; Victoria follows suit; and New Zealand is still 'at it' when Christmas comes round.

The description of one Australian woolshed, and the manner of conducting the work, will serve for all, though there are differences in the make and shape of the buildings and in the mode of working. But these differences are of

little importance, and are mostly matters of individual taste, one man holding one style of building to be the best suited for the purpose, while another man of equally great experience will favour a different one.

I shall say nothing at present of the great shearers' strikes, but take it for granted that on the large station or sheep-run we are going to visit everything is working smoothly, and the shearing agreement found satisfactory by employer and employed. There has been a grand season; feed is plentiful; the weather—as it can be just at this time—is perfection, and all looks most promising for a start.

The woolshed and huts where the shearers and shed-hands live during the shearing season stand—the shed on a slight eminence—about one mile from the homestead. We will go and examine these. The shed we find to be one of the usual sort in Australia, namely, what is called a T-shed from its shape, the long portion of the letter forming the main building, substantially built of wood or stone, with lofty iron roof. Down each side is a clear space some ten feet in width, technically known as 'the board.' Here the shearers work. The centre of the shed is divided down the middle and across into conveniently sized pens, where the great body of the sheep stand; and next the 'board' on each side are what are called the 'catching' pens, from which the shearers opposite take their sheep as they want them. These smaller pens are filled up when empty by the 'shed-yarder.' All these sheep-pens are floored with battens placed a little distance apart, in order to permit all dirt to get away. The top of the letter represents the end of the shed, wherein are situated the tables on which are spread out the fleeces as they are shorn off by the shearers, and picked up by the boys, called 'pickers-up.' Behind these tables, which stretch across the shed from 'board' to 'board,' stand the wool-rollers or 'skirters' (facing the shearers), whose business it is to take off any dirty or inferior wool from the fleeces. These are then neatly rolled up inside out and placed on the classer's table behind. He again places them in bins according to their quality, whence they are taken by the wool-pressers to be packed in bales, sewn up, marked, and numbered. They then pass to the 'dump,' which much reduces the size of the bales, which are now secured by iron bands and are ready for removal.

On leaving the woolshed, we observe, some few hundred yards away, a small wooden building, which is the 'woolshed store.' Here, for the convenience of the shearers, are kept all the odds and ends they may require while the shearing lasts—sheep-shears, oil, oilstones, tobacco, matches, slop-clothes, drugs, &c. A large body of men is clustered round the door. The roll has been called, the 'agreement' declared satisfactory, and shears, oil, and stone are being sold to the men. This takes a long time; for the shearers are a most particular person, and adopts all sorts of 'dodges' known to the craft with the view of testing the quality of the tools. However, all are at length satisfied, and the men wend their way in twos and threes towards their 'huts' to 'rig up' their shears and eat a hearty tea, or supper as it is called, of beef or mutton

and vegetables, with an unlimited supply of tea and bread and the much-loved 'brownie'—ordinary bread sweetened with brown sugar. All are in the best of spirits, and a variety of subjects are discussed—the weather, politics, the shed 'boss,' the cook's qualities, former triumphs in the shearing-line—'when I was ringer at Malloola' (namely, was leading shearer); while two or three have been down to the woolshed to inspect the rams—which are usually shorn first—and give their several opinions as to what the sheep will be like from a shearer's point of view.

It may be here mentioned that the usual price paid for shearing in Australia is from twelve to fifteen shillings per hundred sheep when the men are found in cook and rations, and twenty shillings when they find themselves. A good cook—in the latter case elected by the men—is perhaps the most important element at shearing-time, for it means the peace and quietness associated with well-prepared meals, at the minimum cost, and little wasted.

As night advances, silence steals over all. The last of the 'slush'-lamps is extinguished, the last game of euchre, or 'ante-up,' played, and all hands seeking their 'bunks,' roll themselves in their blankets, and are soon fast asleep, dreaming of to-morrow's start and the big 'tallies' they will make 'once they get their hands in.'

When the light is good enough, work starts at six A.M., and as we look out from the overseer's cottage a little before that hour we find the sun just rising. The scene is indeed a lovely one: the well-grassed plains and ridges, speaking of Nature's bounty in the shape of an ample rainfall, are dotted here and there with lordly gum, feathery 'she-oak,' and stately pine-tree; while in the 'dreamier distance' the sky-line is broken by a range of hills, and we recall poor Gordon's lines as we fill our lungs in this land of pure atmosphere with a 'dew-laden air-draught resembling a long draught of wine.'

At shearing-time, on large runs, all the shearers live and mess by themselves, being in the nature of contractors; while the other hands connected with the working of the shed—such as yarders, pickers-up, wool-rollers, branders, &c., are paid weekly wages, and the station-owner finds them in cook and rations. They mess and sleep in huts apart from the shearers, and are termed 'rouseabouts.' The 'rouseabout' cook has also the care of the woolshed overseer and his assistant on his hands; and as six o'clock draws near, we see him approaching with a flagon, or 'billy' as it is termed, of steaming hot coffee in his hand, and the usual slices of 'brownie' or 'cake.' On these we gratefully break our fast, and the more satisfactorily when we remember that all hands have likewise been refreshed. As we walk across to the woolshed we notice streams of men issuing from the shearers' and rouseabouts' huts; and on entering the shed we find some of the shearers already at their respective places. These have been balloted for on the previous day, and no man is allowed to make any change without permission of the shed-manager. Each shearer has his own little doorway or opening, through which he passes his sheep when shorn into a long narrow pen outside, fenced off from his neighbours. Presently every shearer has arrived;

the pickers-up, with so many shearers apportioned to each to attend upon; the wool-rollers ready at their tables, and all watching eagerly the movements of the manager as he advances watch in hand to ring the bell. The bell rings; the shearers dart into the respective sheep-pens allotted to them, and bring out the seemingly most easily to be shorn sheep they can select in the hurry of the moment, place it on its rump, and shearing has fairly commenced.

And what a busy scene it is; and how strong the contrast presented between the desolateness and the silence of yesterday morning and the liveliness and the activity of to-day. As a rule, the men take things easily at first, for the eager man is apt to 'knock his hand up,' and anyway rams are not to be hurried over. They are desirous, too, at least most of them, of doing fair work and of finding the 'boss's' measure, which they very soon do. From long experience I am of opinion that it is quite as often the fault of the shed manager, by his want of tact and firmness, as the fault of the men that has produced unpleasantness during the shearing-season. Men are but human all the world over; and as the shearer is paid by the number of sheep he shears, time to him is money, and he tries, naturally enough, to shear as many sheep as he possibly can, so long as his style 'suits.' On the other hand, the position of shed-manager is by no means an enviable one, for it is his object to get 'all the wool off'—in short, he has to please his employer and to please the men under his charge as well. It is not an easy matter always, and generally he is glad when shearing is over.

We are roused from these reflections as we are pacing up and down the shearing-board with the manager, who from now to the finish will there devote his time, by the cry from several shearers of 'Wool,' 'Take this fleece away,' as they turn out their sheep and rouse any of the pickers-up—usually boys—who may have been 'dreaming of home and mother' far away. By a dexterous movement, the fleece, divested of the belly-piece and 'trimmings'—which are removed and packed separately—is gathered up and spread well on the roller's table, there to be 'skirted' and rolled and passed to the classer. Presently, fleece after fleece comes pouring in as the slower shearers finish, and now, indeed, each man has to 'move himself,' the pickers-up to keep the floor perfectly clear from fleeces, the sweeper to keep it clean from the pieces, the wool-roller to skirt and to roll properly, and yet to allow none of his work to accumulate. It is enough to bewilder the unaccustomed eye. The bell rings at eight for breakfast. No shearer may catch another sheep; and in a few minutes after, the last sheep is 'off the board,' the fleece rolled, all swept up and tidy, and we are off to breakfast. For this, one hour is allowed. It is a most substantial meal, as indeed they all are, consisting of chops or steak, or some other meat-dish, any quantity of bread, and the inevitable 'brownie,' washed down by large draughts of tea, which is made in buckets and drunk out of tin pints or pannikins. It is really astonishing the quantity of this that a shearer in 'good-going order' will get through in the day, and I doubt if there is any country in the world, perhaps not even Russia, where the consumption of tea per head exceeds



that of Australia. Let us note as the day progresses the amount each shearer, as a rule, imbibes. Before starting in the morning to work, we will remember that he had his pint of coffee or tea; and as he marched down to the shed at six A.M. we might have noticed that he was 'doubly armed,' with a pair of shears in one hand and a pint of tea (or coffee) in the other. But for the rest of the day it will be all tea. At breakfast he will, on the average, have a pint and a half; and as he reappears in the shed after that meal, he is again armed with his pint. Of course, there are exceptions to this, but it is true as a rule. We must remember, also, that shearing is very hard work, and the days are warm. The men perspire freely, and this probably prevents much ill effect.

At nine the bell rings to 'go on;' and the work proceeds till twenty minutes past ten, when an interval of twenty minutes is allowed for 'smoke oh!' at which time the cook's mate, or 'slushy' as he is called, appears with buckets of tea to refresh the workers. The manager takes advantage of this to walk round the pens outside, inspect the shearing as a whole, and if the pens are getting filled up with the sheep, count them out, putting down the number in each pen against the name of the man shearing into it. The sheep are then branded with the owner's distinguishing mark in oil and raddle, or some similar composition; and when a sufficient number is ready to make up a good 'mob,' taken to their various 'paddocks,' no doubt intensely pleased that for them shearing is over for another year.

Dinner takes place at twelve or half-past to the accompaniment of *more* tea, at the conclusion of which the tea-armed shearers return to work. At twenty minutes past two or so, there is another 'smoke oh!' and *more* tea, after which work goes on till four, when a somewhat longer interval occurs, and the cook's mates appear again with what is called 'lunch,' which ushers in our old friend 'brownie,' or perhaps 'cake' and *plenty* tea.

According to the duration of light, the shearing for the day is over at from thirty minutes past five to six, when the men leave the shed with their shears and their empty 'teacup.' Supper follows almost at once, and *more* tea; and from this time till turning-in there are more or less frequent adjournments to the tea-buckets, which are replenished from time to time by the obliging cook and his assistants.

But the tea has rather distracted our attention from our main subject.

Woolsheds generally have sufficient space to contain a supply of sheep that will last till well on in the day; but when the weather is fine and settled, it is bad policy to 'cram' the shed full, and 'fresh' sheep are brought up at intervals. They are much more easily shorn coming in 'full-bellied.' Sometimes a 'stop' occurs on account of rain, and then while the sheep are drying, the men are at first a little at a loss to know what to do with themselves; but they soon find something to do in the shape of riding, running races, and other sports, though too many, I fear, resort to card-playing and various forms of gambling, in which large sums are lost and won; and it is not uncommon for an unfortunate shearer after five or six weeks' hard work

to leave the shed penniless owing to his wretched infatuation. From time to time we are favoured by callers from other sheds, who have finished at their various places and have come over to us to see what the 'cut' is like—namely, whether our 'boss' is very hard to please, or the reverse. Then every now and again men are discharged for persistent bad shearing. This they call 'getting the bullet' or being 'shot.' As a rule, the parting is taken quite philosophically by both employer and employed, and the man's place soon filled, while he tries his luck somewhere else where they may not be so 'pertikler.'

Some men 'follow shearing' literally all the year, with perhaps two to three months' 'spell' or rest, starting in the north and finishing up in New Zealand. Others are small farmers, or the sons of farmers, out to earn a little addition to their income.

The last year or two have witnessed the introduction and complete success of Wolseley's sheep-shearing machine. I cannot now notice it at length; suffice it to say that by its means shears are dispensed with, the wool taken off evenly quite close to the skin—much closer than the most careful shearing with shears—the animal is very rarely cut, and the fleece is shorn off uninjured by 'twice-cutting.' Lastly, it harms the men in no way, but merely puts a better tool into their hands, without diminishing the amount of labour required, and it is as fast as the old shears.

But our shearing is drawing to a close, thanks to good management on both sides. We have had a fair 'cut' all along from the day we started on the rams, through the wethers to the ewes and lambs—the paradise of shearers—and yet we are not sorry it is over and the last day arrived. The 'boss' is down from the head station with the cheque-book, and—tell it not—perhaps the bottle, to settle with the men and give them a parting glass; and for many long months the 'Malloola' woolshed will relapse again into that repose from which six weeks ago we roused it.

## THE HOSPITALLERS.

### CHAPTER II.

MANY of the old mansions of the Welsh Borders bear to this day the sign and symbol of a bygone martial age. Most of the castles, such as Goodrich and Raglan, have long since become nothing but historical and romantic ruins; but where some of the great houses have remained in prosperous hands, the feudal character in many instances still obtains.

And perhaps one of the most perfect specimens along the whole length of Offa's Dyke is Fotheryngsby Court. Built originally of some dark stone, almost impervious to the onslaught of time, and repaired at frequent periods by succeeding Fotheryngsbys, the house, or rather castle, presents to this day perhaps the most perfect specimen of a border fortress. It stands upon a gentle eminence, commanding a wide and beautiful stretch of country, protected by a moat, which is crossed by a drawbridge, bounded by a green courtyard, now



devoted to nothing more warlike than the exercising of horses; and beyond this again lies the Court, flanked by a forest of gigantic elms, where a colony of herons have formed their noisy republic. The moat, no longer a blank watery ditch, is clear and deep, with feathery ash and alder shading the water-lilies, a smooth tarn filled with many kinds of fish. The house itself, with a central tower and widely spreading battlements, seems to have lost its frown, as it looks down upon the sloping lawns and trim parterres all ablaze with scarlet geranium and lobelia, rioting in the huge stone vases on the terrace. Where once the vassals gathered together at the sound of horn, or the warning fires burning on the battlements, long stretches of greensward bear thin white lines, denoting a gentler pastime; the great quadrangle is now a rose-garden, with grassy paths between, the gray walls sheltering the delicate cream and yellow and crimson blooms, so that the winds of heaven may not visit their sweetness too roughly.

Inside, the old mediæval character is still maintained, with so much of modern art and culture as lends an air of comfort to the place. The house, with its dusky oak and chain-armour and stained glass, had no appearance of ruin or disaster, nothing to show that the last of the Fotheryngs was gone and that an alien reigned in his stead, master of his very house, proprietor of every stick and stone within the Court.

But the fortunate young owner of all this majestic beauty was occupied with other thoughts as he sat in his library, where no work literary or otherwise had yet been done, save when a harassed Fotheryngsby indicted epistles to hungry creditors. Hugh Debenham was thinking nothing of this as he sat with a blank sheet of note-paper before him and an unlighted cigar between his teeth. Seated opposite to him, and watching his moody countenance with ill-disguised anxiety, was a lady, a haughty-looking dame, whose flashing black eyes and dark hair proclaimed the fact, as a glance at the young man would show, that their relationship was a close one.

Hugh Debenham looked up and laughed uneasily. 'I daresay I am very much to blame,' said he, with some traces of sarcasm underlying the words; 'still, you know, it was not my fault I was born with a heart. If you only saw'—

'There; spare me the gushing details. If you were five years younger I should know how to deal with you; but as it is— Still, I am only wasting words, as we both very well know. Really, Hugh, I cannot understand your going through the solemn farce of consulting me in the matter.'

'No! I have a fancy to ask my mother's opinion upon these questions—another proof of my being old-fashioned and out of date. We won't quarrel, however; because there is small probability of your being deposed from your high state at present. A man can't very well marry a girl who hides herself away from him, as Sylvia has done.'

Mrs Debenham looked around her with a sigh of satisfaction. The idea of any one but a damsel of the bluest blood presiding over the destinies of the house of Debenham was utterly repugnant to her patrician soul. Still at the same

time it seemed a strange thing that any girl, and especially one of lowly station, should have the audacity to scorn the handsome and gallant owner of such a place as Fotheryngsby.

'I cannot help respecting her,' returned the lady more cheerfully. 'She displayed a most lady-like feeling in doing as she has done.'

'But, my dear mother, she is a lady. There is no doubt of that.'

'There are ladies and ladies,' Mrs Debenham continued smoothly. 'For instance, Mrs Clayton, your solicitor's wife, is a lady; so equally is our neighbour the Countess De la Barre; yet you could not place them on the same level.'

'I haven't made a study of these nice distinctions,' said Hugh dryly. 'And though Miss Goldsworthy did hold an inferior position—isn't that the correct phrase?—I must confess to seeing little difference between mistress and servant. Besides, we are not entirely free from the taint, if it is a taint, which I very much doubt, of being connected with business.'

'That is by no means a just view to take,' said the listener severely. 'It is true that your father speculated with a view to mending his fortunes, as many gentlemen do now. It would be absurd to rank him with an ordinary business man working solely for gain.'

'We won't go into the ethics of aristocratic commerce at present, because I have an engagement in Castleford this morning. I am about to pay my new possession there a visit.—Is it really true that old Captain Goldsworthy is actually an inmate of Blackfriars?'

Mrs Debenham did not speak for a moment. When she did so, there was a certain hardness in her voice that would have struck an observant listener as being akin to something like terror. For a moment her face lost its haughty expression; her eyes seemed to be contemplating some long-forgotten but unpleasant mental picture.

'He is there—yes. I never thought of that. There was some—some unpleasantness between your father and him when Captain Goldsworthy lost his money. I know there were some terrible things said between them.'

Hugh, playing listlessly with a pen and scattering the ink recklessly, heard nothing of this, for a new light had suddenly illuminated the darkness of his mind. It seemed as if the clue for which he had been so long groping in the dark was at length in his hands. 'I wonder,' said he, speaking partially to himself, 'if my Miss Goldsworthy and the Captain are related? Strange that such an idea did not occur to me before.'

'It is possible,' Mrs Debenham returned, with well-simulated carelessness. 'I never saw much of him, though he and your father were such great friends. I fancy this daughter went to London in some capacity.'

'It might be she,' said Hugh musingly, 'it might.—What nonsense am I talking! Do not give yourself any unnecessary anxiety, mother. In all probability it will be my fate to wed a Clara Vere de Vere yet.'

As his mother stood and watched him drive away in the direction of Castleford, the pained expression on her face deepened, and certain uncomfortable forebodings troubled the watcher, as the memory of an old crime is touched by some unconscious hand. 'Was it a crime,' she

murmured to herself, 'or only an act of prudence?' She turned away, and approaching a distant corner of the room, unlocked a small ebony cabinet, ornamented by heavy brass fittings. Inside lay a heap of papers, faded letters tied up with a piece of faint blue riband, from which there arose that sickly smell peculiar to old documents. Hastily turning over the various bundles, she arrived at length at the packet she was in search of—a small parcel of documents folded in brown paper, and bearing the written inscription, 'Goldsworthy.'

Most of the letters were merely tissues—that is, business epistles indited in an old-fashioned letter-book of the carbon paper and stylus type, dry communications of a purely commercial nature, mostly relating to stocks and shares, the jargon of which would be unintelligible to the average reader. One of them, folded away by itself, ran as follows :

25/7/74.

DEAR GOLDSWORTHY.—I cannot see you to-day, being confined to the house with a broken arm, as you probably know. This anxiety is fearful. But you must not suffer for me, as, after all, I can stand the crash best. Go to town immediately and dispose of every share, and warn all your friends. Think only of yourself, and nothing of the unhappy individual who has placed you in such imminent financial peril. I have wired my broker to do the best he can.—Yours ever, H. CRICHTON DEBENHAM.

P.S.—If you have time, give me ten minutes before you start.

'If he had known,' murmured Mrs Debenham, 'we should have been ruined. As it was, there was barely time to save ourselves. And yet I could almost wish that I had never seen this fatal letter.'

Meanwhile, all unconscious of this nameless, shapeless dishonour, Hugh Debenham drove into Castleford, looking forward with almost boyish pleasure to visiting his new and strange possession. A thousand charitable schemes engaged his mind, little plans for the increased comfort of his pensioners, who, sooth to say, had been somewhat neglected by the last of the Fotheryngsbys. There was some little business to be transacted, first principally a visit to a decorator and artist who had taken no slight part in the adornment of Fotheryngsby Court. It was in the direction of this individual's house that Debenham first directed his steps upon reaching Castleford.

There are few towns of any size without one inhabitant of more than ordinary mental powers, and Harold Abelwhite, the crippled artist, represented most of the artistic talent of Castleford. Born of the humblest parentage, and often being acquainted with the actual want of food, there was yet something indomitable in that white face and feeble body. He lived alone in one of the small cottages on the outskirts of Castleford, attending to his own wants, and painting such pictures as one day will make him famous. Unaided, untaught, weighed down by stress of circumstance, the painter had yet succeeded in educating himself, and, what is harder still, in keeping himself by the proceeds of his brush and pencil.

It was a pretty little cottage, with a small garden, filled with old-fashioned flowers; and as Debenham approached, he found the painter tying up some sweet-peas to a trellis-work behind which lay the house. There were but two rooms down-stairs, each meanly furnished, and devoted to the requirements of eating and sleeping. It was only when the stairs were mounted that the owner's artistic tastes were fully disclosed.

The whole floor, turned into one room, and lighted by a large latticed window, had been converted into a studio. There was a curiously-woven Persian carpet on the floor, contrasting harmoniously with the draped hangings on the walls, out of which peeped here and there a finished picture, or a marble statue standing boldly out against the sombre background; or, again, a suit of Milanese armour towering above a perfect forest of palms and ferns, with which the studio was profusely ornamented; while the only flowers there were huge nosegays of deep yellow roses, thrown carelessly, as it seemed, into china bowls. In the centre of the floor stood a picture on an easel, carefully covered with a white cloth, and this, together with an open paint-box, was the sole evidence of there being any particular work on hand.

'What a beautiful room!' Debenham cried admiringly. 'There is certainly nothing conventional in its treatment, and that is something nowadays.'

'Every one can enjoy art at home now,' replied the cripple, his sensitive face flushing at the compliment, 'if he only has the taste. I could make every home in England artistic, with no outlay to speak of.'

Hugh nodded slightly, but said nothing in return. He was fascinated by the quiet beauty of the place, and not a little interested in the earnestness of his companion. There was something contagious in the enthusiasm of the handsome cripple, with face aflame and dark eyes burning, as he touched upon his favourite theme—the artistic education of the people. At length Hugh asked, 'How about the cabinet?'

'The difficulty is solved; the damaged marqueterie has been repaired, even better than I thought possible. Look there.' The speaker pointed to an exquisite specimen of an inlaid cabinet, so perfect that Debenham could scarcely believe it to be the same damaged work of art he had seen it to be only a week previously.

'I always thought you were a genius,' he said admiringly. 'It was a pet piece of furniture of my father's—the receptacle for his business papers, in fact. May I see the picture you have veiled so closely?'

The artist flushed again, but this time in a bashful kind of way, as a lover might when displaying his lady's picture. With a certain lingering tenderness he put the white cloth aside.

It was a simple subject enough, treated without any meretricious attempt at display—a simple cottage interior, with the window filled with geraniums and creeping plants; and in the dim light filtering through the leaves was the figure of a girl, clad all in white, reading from a book upon the table. Close by her side was another figure, that of a man clad in a naval uniform, his hands crossed before him in an attitude of atten-

tion; while the group was made up by a third, a somewhat older man, clad in a scarlet coat, his eyes fixed devotedly upon the reader's face. The colouring, soft and subdued, served only to throw up the vivid naturalness of the painting.

Artist and spectator stood a moment, the one regarding the work intently, the painter with his gaze fixed almost sternly upon his companion's face, and as he did so he saw a strange glad light flash into Debenham's eyes—a look of pleased recognition illuminating every feature.

'That is no effort of imagination,' he cried; 'you know all those characters?'

'Yes, I know them,' said the artist quietly. 'How did you discover that?'

'Because I happen to be acquainted with that lady. Will you so far favour me as to give me her address?'

'Ah!' said the cripple, 'I am a solitary man, with few pleasures and few friends. To me the study of expression is a necessity of my art. And as you examined that picture I watched you. In that brief moment I learnt your secret—I read the joy in your face. Forgive me if I speak plainly. What is Sylvia Goldsworthy to you?'

'That question you have no right to ask,' Hugh replied gently. 'I am not angry with you, because I feel that you mean well.'

But Abelwhite scarcely caught the purport of these words. Every nerve in his body quivered with restless agitation, though his keen earnest gaze never turned from his visitor's face. For a moment he hesitated, like one who complies against his will; then he simply said, 'Come with me.'

They passed out together through the streets of Castleford, the handsome aristocrat and crippled artist walking side by side in silence, till at length the Widemarsh Street was reached. Here, before the long blank wall bounding the Blackfriars' Hospital, Abelwhite paused, and turning down a side-lane, opened a door in the wall and bade his companion enter.

The gardens lay still and quiet in the peaceful sunshine. The ancient ruin, with its mantle of ivy rustling in the breeze, gave a quaint bygone air to the place. It seemed to Hugh as if he had shaken off the world, and left every feeling, save that of rapture, far behind.

'What a beautiful old place!' he cried. 'What do you call it?'

'We call it the Blackfriars' Hospital—your property now.—Mr Debenham, you will find it to be a great responsibility. It is in your power to make the lives of these worthy men happy. Come and see them occasionally, and note what a little it takes to make people joyful and lighthearted.'

'They shall not complain,' Hugh replied mechanically. 'Can I see the cottages?'

There were cool shadows in the quadrangle, a pleasant smell of homely flowers—wallflowers, mignonette, and Brompton stock, and over all a dead silence, save for the voice of a woman reading behind one of the open doors. Hugh felt himself drawn towards the cottage, and, looking in, beheld a copy of Abelwhite's picture, only the figures were real and lifelike. There was the Captain, seated in his chair; and opposite him Ben Choppin, listening reverently to the words

falling from the reader's lips, the sound of a sweet womanly voice, the tones of which caused the watcher's heart to beat a little faster and the colour to deepen on his cheek. For some moments he stood, till the even tones ceased at length and the book was laid aside.

'May we enter?' Hugh asked eagerly. 'Would they mind?'

'Why not?' Abelwhite asked. 'They should be pleased enough to welcome you, and I am a constant visitor; and'—here the speaker lowered his voice till his words were scarcely audible—'may it be that I have done right; but I am not without misgivings.'

## IVORY.

THERE are not many specimens of luxury which have excited so much interest in the public mind during the past few years as Ivory. Articles have been written by the score, with a view of proving conclusively that at no remote future the supply of ivory will cease altogether; indeed, some writers, drawing a little upon their imagination, have ventured to prophesy that within a few years ivory ornaments would be treasured as great rarities.

Although this view has gained ground of late years, the idea is not new, as an Encyclopædia published in 1874 states: 'If to the quantity of ivory required for Britain be added that required for the other countries of Europe, Asia, and America, the number of elephants annually killed must be very great; and the passion for ivory may eventually lead to the extermination of this noble animal.' But four years later, the quantity of ivory offered in the London auctions (six hundred and seventy tons) was the largest supply submitted to buyers in any one year during the past quarter of a century. In the year 1864 five hundred and twenty-two tons of ivory were brought to public sale; during 1869, five hundred and eleven tons; in 1874, four hundred and ninety-six tons; 1879 offered five hundred and ten tons; and 1884 five hundred and thirty-one tons. The average annual supply at the London auctions during the nineteen years from 1863 to 1881 was five hundred and fourteen tons; but in the following twelve months (1882) only three hundred and ten tons were submitted to buyers. But the discussion then raised as to the probable early extinction of ivory was allayed by the average annual supply in London during the two following years (1883 and 1884) increasing to four hundred and seventy-eight tons.

The world's requirements of this valuable article have always been mainly dependent upon the supplies obtainable from the Dark Continent of Africa. No doubt, many travellers can remember the time when elephants were to be seen a little distance north of the Cape; but it is a distinct fact that the animals move off directly the white man appears; and with the march of civilisation, elephants have been driven far into the interior of Africa, and are now seldom seen anywhere south of the Zambesi.

This fact has no doubt had a considerable effect in the falling-off of supplies of ivory during the past five years, as the present haunts of the elephants are so far removed from ports of



shipment as to cause the question of transport to be a difficult matter. It was the knowledge of this fact that caused every one in the trade to doubt the possibility of Emin Pasha bringing any quantity of ivory with him from the interior of Africa, although numerous statements were made in the press that the traveller had sixty tons of ivory with him; and our readers will remember that reports went even further than this, it being stated that some German bankers had been consulted with a view of their advancing the sum of sixty thousand pounds against the ivory when it reached the coast.

The tusks of ivory are carried by the natives on their heads or shoulders; and to prevent the ivory slipping, it is frequently fastened in a sort of cage of four short pieces of wood. Large heavy teeth are slung on to a pole and carried by two natives. Some of the largest teeth known have weighed from one hundred and seventy to one hundred and eighty pounds each tusk; but these are rare, although teeth weighing from eighty to one hundred pounds each are frequently met with in the London auctions.

It is curious how little is known regarding the age attained by elephants in their wild state; it would be most interesting to know the age of one of these splendid animals bearing tusks weighing together, say, three hundred pounds' weight. Another point never satisfactorily explained is, whether the small teeth—known in the trade as 'scrivelloes'—mostly averaging from five to ten pounds each, generally commanding from forty to fifty pounds per hundredweight, the ivory being close and useful—are the early growth of larger teeth, or the produce of a different species of elephant. Opinions mostly lean to the latter notion. Soft ivory always commands a higher price in the market than hard, and naturally teeth that are sound are more valuable than those containing cracks or other defects. Good-sized teeth are hollow where they were attached to the elephant, and for some distance down the tusk; and the quantity of disease apparent in the interior points distinctly to the fact that this disease must cause the animals excessive pain, and may perhaps go to account for the fearful noise heard from the haunts of elephants, often referred to in books of travel.

The demand for billiard balls has shown considerable increase of late years, and this is not surprising when our readers think of the supply required to keep pace with the trade requirements. Many old Indian merchants can remember when a billiard table was a rarity in India; but at the present time there is a big annual demand for 'bangles' (pieces of ivory), from which the billiard balls are manufactured in the East. As a matter of fact, the very highest prices paid for any description of ivory are realised for what are known in the trade as 'cut billiard-ball pieces,' which generally weigh from eight to thirteen pounds each, and measure across two and a half to three inches; to-day's value of such being ninety-five to one hundred and six pounds per hundredweight. These prices were no doubt taken as a basis by a contemporary who announced that the price of ivory had advanced to two thousand pounds sterling per ton and upwards. Such an all-round average price as this would only be paid for the finest ivory suitable for billiard balls;

whereas in nearly every parcel there is a quantity of inferior and defective teeth, which only command from forty to fifty pounds per hundredweight. We think, in estimating the all-round average value of ivory to-day as about thirteen hundred pounds per ton, we are very near the actual fact. Glancing back a quarter of a century, we find the average value twenty-five years ago was about six hundred to six hundred and fifty pounds per ton.

During the past twenty years, nine thousand one hundred and forty-four tons of ivory have been offered in the London public auctions, and this would represent the destruction of some four hundred and fifty thousand elephants. But to further fully realise the immense numbers of this noble animal which must have existed in Africa, it is necessary to remember that the above figures only include the number of elephants killed for their ivory, and it is well known that only the males possess ivory tusks.

The opinion is frequently expressed that a great deal of the ivory brought from the interior was from elephants found dead, or the remains of deceased elephants; but the best information we have met with concerning the origin of the ivory supply points to the bulk—in fact, nearly all—being taken from elephants shot for this special purpose.

The native carriers from the interior do not think much of the numbers of elephants killed annually to supply the trade demand, in comparison with the living herds on the vast plains of the interior, so that it is quite possible increased quantities of ivory may come forward when the vast continent of Africa is opened up.

The imports into London have certainly shown a decided falling off during the past five years, the average annual quantity in the sales from 1885 to 1889 being three hundred and forty-seven tons, against an annual supply during the five years 1880 to 1884 of four hundred and fifty tons.

But we must point out that Liverpool has had public sales of ivory during the last few years, principally west coast quality brought by the direct steamers, and often including, we believe, some of the River Niger Company's ivory, although the bulk of their imports is sold in London.

Another important feature is the quantity of ivory obtained from the Congo Free State by the Belgian Company; and this is all sold in Antwerp; and the auction held there last autumn included no fewer than thirty-one tons; and there was another sale in Antwerp early in the present year of fifteen tons.

We think we may safely state that the sorting and classification of ivory, an important matter to all concerned, is very much better in the London catalogues than at any other market; and there is very little doubt that higher prices are realised in consequence.

The London public sales which opened on the 28th January and closed on 31st January 1890, included ninety-four and a half tons ivory, which brought together a large attendance of buyers from all parts, and the heavy advance in values secured at the previous London sales in October 1889 were fairly well maintained.

In closing our article upon this very interesting subject, we think it is difficult to speak of the



future; there is the undoubted fact that since the Soudan troubles commenced, many articles previously exported from that district have ceased entirely to come forward, and this, in our opinion, has had an important effect also upon the supplies of ivory; and whenever trade from the interior is well resumed, the high price now obtainable for elephants' tusks will certainly be a strong incentive to traders to procure the article.

### LYNCHING IN AMERICA.

It frequently happens in America that a mob, incensed by the sight of some blood-curdling deed, takes the law into its own hands and gives immediate expression to its natural and righteous indignation. It is with a view of discountenancing every kind of extra-judicial punishment, and of passing over the punishment of criminals to the properly-constituted authorities, that we give the following account of what took place at Fort Collins, in the State of Colorado, about three years ago. An added terror, no doubt, will always accompany an outburst of popular fury, and it is possible that an occasional exercise of lynch-law may have a deterrent effect on scoundrels and ruffians whom no other terrors can restrain. But the annals of justice furnish numberless instances in which men have been confronted with every appearance of guilt, but where a fuller investigation has proved them innocent. In the early days of America, as in the early days of the world, it was not only natural but necessary that prompt punishment should be dealt out to murderers, lest—as there did not then exist the facilities for the proper disposal of criminals which we now possess—they might escape scot-free, either by eluding their jailers, or by an effectual resistance to constituted authorities being organised on their behalf by relatives, friends, or followers.

It is not too much to say that many of the most prosperous and law-abiding cities in Central and Western America have been evolved from rough camps, occupied by all kinds of adventurers and desperadoes, who regarded the taking of human life as little more than a jest. An Irishman, it was said twenty years ago, will bandy more words about the price of a couple of drinks than will the 'shootists' of the Pacific over a quarrel which ends in the taking of as many lives. In that wild and unorganised state of society, it became absolutely necessary for the peaceable citizens to combine together, and by the establishment of 'vigilance committees,' pursue and punish men who committed serious crimes. But in places so far civilised as to boast of a sheriff and a jail, any interference with justice is unwarranted and reprehensible, and ought not to be left unpunished.

Perhaps the less said about the murder at Fort Collins the better. It was of an unspeakably brutal character. The guilt of the murderer was manifest. A millwright, John Howe by name, murdered his wife in the street and in the presence of a driver of a wagon. The deed was done with a celerity which admitted of no interference on the part of this horrified witness of the tragedy, who as soon as possible rushed to the support of the victim and vainly endeavoured to staunch the flowing blood. Howe was admittedly partially intoxicated at the time. The motive for

the crime arose out of the jealous nature of Howe, who accused his wife of indiscretions which all who knew her were convinced were false. Howe was arrested in his own house, and without trouble conveyed to the county jail, escorted by the sheriff and several deputies. This happened about mid-day.

Fort Collins, though it goes by the name of city, is a town containing little more than a thousand inhabitants. By three o'clock there was commotion among these. The news of the tragedy had spread like wildfire. Men began to saunter up and form groups and talk; the groups thickened hugely, and then melted into one vast dense crowd. Every one knows how strangely the emotional power multiplies itself in all assemblages of human beings; how men in a body will do things which no single man among them would think of doing. And so there was a great heaving and pushing and swaying to and fro; and the excitement grew and grew, and the feeling of indignant demand for the quick retribution of outraged life swelled, until it could be confined by no bounds. Lynching was loudly talked of. The crowd needed only a leader to make a rush and tear the prisoner from his keepers. But a leader was not immediately forthcoming; and the crowd melted away, as crowds will unless provided with continuous food for excitement.

But the fire which had been kindled only smouldered; it had not died out. At nine o'clock that evening some three hundred men presented themselves at the jail and demanded admittance. Their manner bespoke business. All were mounted, and the leaders were effectually masked. Admittance was refused; but they were not to be balked. The jailer, the sheriff, and his posse of some twenty men made a faint-hearted resistance and succumbed to superior force.

There is not in an American jail that sombre solidity about everything which so depresses a visitor to a British jail; consequently, the door of Fort Collins jail soon yielded to the application of a pine-log battering-ram; and the masked men entered and dragged Howe from his cell. Understanding what was taking place, the miscreant flung himself a few times against the iron bars which formed his cage, and then, in the lowest depth of despair, crouched in abject fear upon the straw which covered the floor of his cell. But the battering-ram which had broken open the jail door soon forced the frail barrier which separated Howe from his self-constituted judges, and through the opening the fear-paralysed wretch was dragged. Arrived at the base of a derrick which was being used in the construction of a house at the outskirts of the town, the cavalcade halted. The majority of those who composed it dismounted. The leader spoke briefly and to the point. The sense of justice which resided in the breasts of the murderer's self-constituted executioners compelled them to ask if Howe had anything to say, and to allow him a few minutes to make his peace with Heaven. Howe had no appeal to make to Heaven. But singling out the man whom by some subtle magnetism all recognised as the superior power, the criminal threw himself at his feet and clung with piteous entreaties to his knees. The latter shook him off and turned away in disgust. His cowardly cries for pity were met by derisive shouts. A

noose was quickly slipped over his head and around his neck; the rope was then passed over the top of the derrick and seized by a hundred strong hands. How in all doubtful transactions men like to divide their responsibility! The leader of the masked men gave the word. 'One, two, three!' cried the men at the rope. Howe shot up into the air as if a ton-weight had fallen at the other end of the hempen cord, and so the life was strangled out of him. Without comment the rope was tied to the base of the derrick; and the cavalcade moved off in silence, leaving the dead body swaying in the wind.

It must not be understood that in general circumstances the respect for law and order in by far the greater part of America is less marked than it is in Britain. But lest any one should suppose that violations of the ordinary course of justice such as we have described are by any means infrequent, let us say that within six months of our writing at least a dozen cases of lynching have been brought to our notice. To every sensitive heart there is surely something peculiarly revolting in the display of deliberate human bloodshed, in calmly going to work to deprive a fellow-creature of existence. But if it is necessary that death punishments should be inflicted, there can be no two opinions about the desirability of their being divested of all appearance of vindictiveness. If the most solemn tribunals are liable to err—and all human institutions are fallible—how much more likely is it that an infuriated crowd will make mistakes; and mistakes in such matters as these are beyond rectification. It is recognised in America that the punishment of all misdemeanours is the function of the law, and punishment is meted out to those who interfere with the exercise of its functions except in this the 'head and front' of all offences. Hence, although we see many notices of lynchings in the newspapers of America, in none, or in remarkably few, does the Government think it its duty to see that the lynchers are traced and properly punished.

The necessity for justice to move slowly and to be in the hands of properly-constituted authorities, if it is to be even-handed, was never better illustrated than by a case reported at great length in the *Procès Criminels Extraordinaires*. Two travellers in France put up at the same inn. At the dead of night the inmates were aroused by cries of 'Murder!' The servants of the inn rushed to the room from which the sounds proceeded, and there found one of the strangers standing over the other with a lighted candle in one hand, a knife reeking with blood in the other, and a look of intense horror on his face. The knife had obviously been drawn from the wound in the chest of the murdered man. The *habits de nuit* of the survivor were covered with blood, which had obviously gushed from the other's wounds on the withdrawal of the knife. The hotel servants at once accused him of murder. He was given into custody, and the next day brought up for examination. He then protested his innocence, and gave a very plausible explanation of his presence in the murdered man's room and of the position in which he was found. He said that just as he was about to blow out his light, hearing cries for help, he snatched up his

candle, and proceeding along the corridor, was directed by groans to the room in which he was found. He there saw a man extended on the floor with a knife plunged in his bosom. He withdrew it instinctively. No sooner had he done this than the servants entered, and found him in the position described. He was naturally horror-stricken at the sight, and his look of horror had been mistaken by the hotel servants for one of guilt.

But, fortunately, the circumstantial evidence that will hang a man does not depend upon the force of any one circumstance or set of circumstances, but upon the strength of the whole. There was one link in the chain missing—the absence of all motive for the crime. Under the circumstances, the accused could hardly have stolen anything from the deceased, inasmuch as a minute search of the room had revealed no trace of anything having been secreted. The theory that the crime was the result of private hatred of long-standing was altogether as baseless. No connection could be traced between the two men; on the contrary, there was evidence of no look of recognition having passed between them. The Court recognised the difficulty, and remanded the accused. No further evidence against him was forthcoming. In his favour, it was shown that he was a man against whose honesty nothing could be urged. Such being the state of things, it yet looked as though the logical and ordinary consequence of the man's position must follow and his life be forfeited.

But no. The case took an unexpected turn. A man who was convicted of horse-stealing and sentenced to penal servitude for life, confessed that he was the murderer, and substantiated his statements with indubitable proofs. He was staying at the hotel on the night in question. His motive for the crime was the possession of a pocket-book containing notes and money which was exhibited by the deceased in his presence. He gave information as to where the pocket-book—which, by the way, contained part of the stolen notes and money and the murdered man's name—would be found; he was recognised as having been in the company of the deceased on the night of the murder; the knife with which it was committed was proved to have been his property; and he justly suffered the death penalty.

Had it not been for this providential delay, the death penalty would have been inflicted upon an innocent man. To him no remuneration—so to speak—would have been possible. And we ask what recompense could have been made to his wife, his surviving relatives, or those dependent upon him?

The foregoing is an instance in which the application of lynch-law would have been as baneful in fact as it is in philosophy. What is bad in principle cannot be good in practice. We shrink from a consideration of what dire injustice may result from a number of individuals being allowed without prodigious punishment to usurp the functions of the legislature and to substitute hatred and revenge for the scales of justice. And in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it cannot be pleaded that lynching is necessary for the security of society, the suspected criminal being forcibly taken from the safe custody of those who only have the right to inflict death.

The perfunctoriness in the administration of justice in America, the manner in which political influence can be brought to bear in favour of a criminal, and the power of the almighty dollar to clog the wheels of justice—all these things are matters for regret, and are, we believe, the *raison d'être* of lynchings. They all, however, admit of removal by legislative enactment; and it is to be hoped that the representatives of the people will plead for their abolition, and that in the near future these foul blots will be removed.

The estimate in which human life is held in certain parts of Western America is well illustrated by an anecdote which was told to us by an ex-Attorney-general of the State of Nevada. The story contains an element of humour; but it may serve to point a moral as well as adorn a tale. In a certain small town out West, a stranger once presented a cheque to the cashier of a bank who was also a county judge. 'The cheque is all right, sir,' said the judge. 'But the evidence you offer in identifying yourself as the person to whose order it is drawn is scarcely sufficient.'

'I have known you to hang a man on less evidence,' was the stranger's response.

'Quite likely,' replied the judge; 'but when it comes to letting go of cold cash, we have to be careful.'

#### SOME EAST END STUDIES.

THE East End of London, despite the factitious and temporary enthusiasm for 'slumming,' fashionable not so long ago, is to the majority of West End people an unknown land. A few sketches from actual life—for to the writer, Whitechapel and Bethnal Green and the area between them are nearly as familiar as Oxford Street—may possibly interest people who cannot imagine any London but their own familiar one, and are more at home in making a continental tour than a journey from one end of London to the other.

In those thickly-populated streets, courts, and in some cases ancient squares, fallen from their high estate, there is a scene of life which in its reality is sometimes broadly humorous, sometimes Dantesque in its grim horrors. It is of the lighter side of life we here propose to speak, and especially to introduce four distinctive characters to the reader, which are probably very little known to the ordinary West End inhabitant.

To see the east of London at its fullest 'typical development,' as the gentleman in *Happy Thoughts* calls it, you must visit it about seven P.M. on Saturday. The crowded stream of humanity is at its thickest; there is more money in a small way to be expended than at any other time, and hence a hundred miniature industries find their opportunity on this evening. Among them comes the first individual whom we would introduce to the reader's notice—the street umbrella auctioneer. He has spread on a sack or other covering in the gutter a quantity of showy umbrellas of all sorts, wonderfully 'faked up,' to use the slang of the trade. Most of them have seen better days, and have fallen from their high estate. After long service, sometimes in very well-to-do quarters, they have come down in a ribless and battered

condition, to be bartered away for a pot plant or the like by the servants. Coming into the street-merchants' hands duly seamed, smartened, and furbished, they make a fine show under the glaring paraffin burner which stands behind them, and are at prices within the reach of anybody having a few pence to spend.

The auctioneer has one fine old crusted joke or piece of stage-business which he never omits, its object being to attract a crowd. For he is far above the mere prosaic vendor of goods who simply offers them for sale. 'Patter,' which means street rhetoric, is the belief on which he relies to sell his wares. His first proceeding is the farcical piece of business which commences the evening's work. Unfurling a dilapidated and huge umbrella with a hundred holes in it, and several of its ribs shaking through them, the facetious vendor informs the ladies and gentlemen 'that no money would purchase it, for it is a family treasure. His missus used it when a gal in their courtin' days; many a 'appy 'our 'ave they passed beneath it.' Here he sighs deeply, and inspects it pathetically. 'After they were married, the old woman took it wherever she went; and after they had a family it got into its present condition from—her whacking him about the 'ead with it whenever he came home "tight." (Roars of laughter.) He wouldn't part with it for a fi'-pun note.' This ancient and always successful prologue being over, a thick crowd has collected; and the wily vendor selects a showy umbrella, opens and shuts it, violently manipulates it, declares it to be unbreakable, and puts it up at ten shillings. General silence ensues, and he lowers his price with great rapidity to one shilling and sixpence, at which, with a mystic slap on the ribs—which always denotes that the lowest limit is reached—he generally sells it. He warmly thanks the purchaser, loudly informing the crowd that he has sold it to a gentleman who has money, whereas they, to all appearance, are either 'stone-broke,' or have 'left their ha'pence on the chimney-piece.' And the 'gentleman,' much embarrassed by the general publicity thrust on him, hastily retires.

Fixing his eye on some girl who is looking longingly at the showy little umbrellas in front, he offers her one which has a gorgeous handle, and which, in his dexterous hands and under the paraffin glare, seems equally new and strong, and forcing it on her much as a conjurer does a card, usually effects a sale at about one-sixth of his starting price. The young lady blushing hears herself loudly complimented on her taste and pecuniary means, much as her predecessor had been, and has to hear a sly allusion to her 'young man's' admiration of the article 'when he's out with her to-morrer.'

In this free-and-easy style the merchant disposes of his stock—we have seen a large one got rid of in a very short time—and especially in a drizzling night. The summer of 1888 was a very fine one for the trade. The most difficult customers to get over are the middle-aged women out marketing, who want an umbrella for family use, and who know by hard experience the value of every penny, who also have a thoroughly effective system of scrutinising everything they buy. Some of the umbrellas so purchased are really wonderfully good, seeing the used-up state in



which after long service they were originally got rid of, and are very creditable specimens of the 'faking' system. The umbrella merchant has a store of rough-and-ready chaff, which is necessary, for there are often lookers-on who have no intention of buying, but of chaffing; these are, however, frequently cajoled into an investment.

Another characteristic figure is that of the street medicine vendor, who, standing at his stall, covered with pills and potions, makes no attempt to sell any at first. Rather would you take him for a disinterested philosopher. Gazing into vacancy, he pours forth a stream of sonorous words on the human system, and has a frightful diagram in glaring colours of a supposed human stomach which has been the seat of dyspepsia. The crowd gape and listen, understanding about one word in ten. Sometimes they are invited to breathe into a glass containing clear liquid. By a very simple chemical trick, the breath causes a precipitate to be thrown down; whereupon the breather, all aghast, is solemnly informed, in stentorian tones—for unwished-for publicity attends most of these transactions down East—that his lungs are in a condition of unsoundness from his stomach; which, however, can be remedied by a box of the wonderful pills, 'Which you'll pay a shilling for in any chemist's shop in London—try that one at the corner—and which I offer at the nominal price of one penny.' Quite a sensation is produced, and a brisk demand ensues for the pills. Remedies for corns also go with great rapidity; and for cough mixtures the demand is enormous. Sometimes the vendor becomes facetious as the night wears on, and does a big business in powders 'warranted to cool your hot coppers after getting tight to-night.' At other times he fixes with his glittering eye some cadaverous-looking individual in the crowd, and, to his great embarrassment, calls him up to the stall and presents him gratis with a box of pills, as 'I can see by your happearance, sir, that your liver is dishorganised, and I wish to benefit my speeches.' This eleemosynary treatment is usually a profitable investment, and the pennies roll in rapidly.

Given a fine evening and a quiet side street abutting on the main road where pass the madding crowd, the street reciter does a fair trade. He is shabbily dressed, but has an appearance of having seen better days, and invariably carries a white handkerchief as his assistant in gesticulation much as Elliston did in our grandfathers' days, a habit which induced much remonstrance from Lord Byron when on the Drury Lane Committee. The reciter always makes a long speech, with a good deal of tautology, and ends by informing the assembled crowd that he trusts to their generosity to reward his efforts to amuse them. He then pauses, flourishes his handkerchief, smooths his moustache, settles his collar, and starts off at once, using much the same stilted style and profuse gesticulation which were so popular with spontaneous audiences in the days of the Victoria Theatre. All sorts of recitations are in his *répertoire*, those which have been so well known from modern pens of late years taking their turn with American and old English ones. Pathos and babies usually fetch the women's pennies; vigorous Americanisms of the *Phil Blood's Leap* type, the men's. Sometimes he realises a small harvest of bronze, and the rougher the

audience, curiously enough the better the chance of a 'genteel' appearance in the reciter. 'Pore chap! He's never bin used to this, he hasn't,' is the general comment; and with that real sympathy only found amid the poor classes to any general extent, the pence emphasise the sentiment. Some years back a prominent East End figure was a man of some talent, who, with a wooden sword, recited outside the public-houses, Richard III. and Macbeth's fieriest soliloquies, as also Hamlet's and Othello's.

Nor must we forget the book auctioneer, who vends showy but usually stupid books andquires of back numbers of popular periodicals of old date for trifling prices. He usually stands upon a cart, and informs his auditors that they can get an enormous amount 'of the most hinteresting reading for the fireside as'll keep the workman out of the public,' for a mere trifle. After every three or four words, he smacks violently the book he is exhibiting, and ruffles its leaves to show how strong is its condition; while in case any backwardness is shown by the crowd, he warmly expostulates with them, and becomes quite personal in his animadversions on their spending their money on beer rather than on books.

Lastly must be mentioned the 'totter,' a sordid, melancholy figure. Doubtless, this epithet will puzzle the reader. In East End parlance, 'totting' means collecting every scrap of paper, wood, iron, coal, bone, or other odds and ends which lie in the gutters. It is a business akin to that of the Parisian *chiffonnier*, and the sack over its practitioner's shoulder holds a motley and unsavoury selection. Gliding hither and thither amid the crowds of marketing people, the silent, gloomy 'totter' pursues his or her crouching way, a living illustration of the vast gulf in London which divides enormous wealth from poverty as deep as any in the world.

#### EARTH'S SHADOW.

WHAT spirit darkens the bloom of day?

The clovered meadow no sweetness yields;

A silence rests on the waveless fields;

The world is haggard and gaunt and gray.

The clouds drift wearily over the sky;

The grain is yellow, the hills are bare;

A heaviness broods in the quiet air;

The streamlet sobs as it passes by.

But yesterday morn the flowers were sweet,

The day was bright and the world was young;

And in the even the throistle sung,

And his song was glad and the hours were fleet.

But a misty darkness glimmers athwart

The fields to-day, and the hours are long;

And I hear a dirge in the throistle's song;

For the gloom is the shadow of thee, my heart.

VIRNA WOODS.

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